

TO

Robt. Armour.

A .

LETTER

FROM

J. C. GRANT, ESQUIRE,

OF MONTREAL,

IN REPLY

TO THE HONORABLE AND VENERABLE

JOHN STRACHAN, D. D. L. L. D.

ARCHDEACON OF YORK.



KINGSTON, U. C.

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1830.

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LETTER, &c.

TO THE HONORABLE AND VENERABLE JOHN STRACHAN.

D. D. L. L. D. ARCHDEACON OF YORK.

Honorable and Venerable Sir,

The Upper Canada Herald of the 9th instant containing a Letter addressed by you to the Rev'd. John Lee, D. D. &c., was recently put into my hands. Had your labours been confined to the vindication of your own reputation, that publication might have been contemptuously overlooked, and like the rest of your literary productions suffered to sink into oblivion. (See note A.)

I find however that under pretext of defending your own, you have employed the press as an engine to slander my character among that of others.

As silence might be construed into a conviction of the insinuations made against me in that document, by the publication of which you have outraged every principle of charity and christian feeling, I am compelled to come thus forward, and repel them.

Your friends, Sir, will have reason to lament having advised you "*to reply to the Convener of a Committee appointed by so distinguished and venerable a body as the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland;*"—and I feel confident that if, before the publication of that Letter, you had submitted it to the consideration of those friends, the Community would have been spared the painful reflections, which must naturally arise upon perusal of such wanton invectives.

Had the communication in question been the effusion of moments of delirium and passion, caused by some sudden and aggravated provocation, still the author would be subject to the censure which attaches to the propagators of unfounded calumnies. What then can be thought of the man, who could for months together brood over imaginary wrongs, and with slow malignity contemplate schemes of revenge?

Conceding for a moment that you had received some just cause of offence, was it consistent with the spirit of religion, let me ask, in you (instead of repressing) to cherish, rankling in your bosom, feelings of resentment, until rage poured them forth with acrimonious virulence in the shape of a false and malicious libel?

Malice and a thirst for revenge are in general only kindled in the breasts of men by the infliction of injuries; while detraction or the desire to undervalue the reputation of others are generated solely by a spirit of rivalry in some common pursuit, against the more fortunate competitor: dispositions sinful and criminal even under such circumstances. But the heart which can conceive such dispositions, without the incentives which give them birth, must be actuated by the blackest and most odious of all the passions which degrade the character of man.

To you, Sir, I have given no provocation for the calumnies which your subtlety, sharpened by malignity, has endeavoured to invent to prejudice me.

True, I had the honour of being employed by the Petitioners of the Church of Scotland, in the Canadas, to advance their claims to a share of the Clergy Reserves.—Regarding their cause as founded in Law, Justice and true policy I readily consented to become their advocate from a desire to render service (as far as was in my power) to so many of my fellow subjects.

With a mind unbiassed by party feeling on the subject, and without seeking any other reward than the approbation of my constituents and all unprejudiced persons, I resolved to prosecute the cause entrusted to me (which you are pleased to term a *bad one*) zealously, but upon liberal principles, and by fair and honourable means, without courting the favor or dreading the frowns of the *Archdeacon of York* or any other *prominent personage*.—I had hoped, that I had acquitted myself of the task imposed upon me in a way, at least to have shielded me from the reproach of having wilfully misstated facts, with the design of deceiving or prejudicing the interest of any other class of persons.

My constituents have been pleased to express their approbation of the manner in which I conducted their case. I used my humble exertions to bring about the result which has probably disappointed your hopes, and may defeat some of your projects—this “*is the head and front of my offending.*”

You commence your attack against me in the following words “Mr. Grant, a Barrister, not *particularly prominent* in his profession, residing at Montreal, was employed by the Petitioners of the Church of Scotland in the Canadas to advance their claims to a share of the Clergy Reserves. In that character, he was examined by the Committee of the House of Commons.—What he stated on the subject is therefore *worth as much* as the speech of an *Advocate generally is who is paid for defending a BAD CAUSE.*”

I must preface my comments upon the foregoing passage by expressing my thanks for the extremely *liberal* and well intended compliment paid in the last paragraph, to the Honorable profession to which I belong.

The estimation in which I am held in my profession, you must confess, has no bearing whatever upon the subject of your Letter.

Why then attempt to disparage me, by that insidious, and sneering allusion? I will answer for you, Venerable Sir. From the very laudable and truly christian motive of wounding my feelings and lessening me in the estimation of others, an event by which you had nothing to gain, though you had the weakness to imagine, that it could be brought about by the irresistible weight of random opinions and unmerited obloquy circulated by so *prominent* a dignitary, of *Church and State* as John Strachan D. D. L. L. D. Archdeacon of York and a Member of the Legislative and Executive Councils of Upper Canada.

Now Sir, whatever may be the rank I hold in my profession, I trust I shall not be accused of egotism, when I tell you, that I have not attained it, by servility and the profession of principles—always ready to yield to circumstances; not by becoming the Panegyrist of living Princes; nor by engaging in political, Commercial or other controversies, and espousing the side of the most powerful and influential party—in fine, Sir, not by any of those “*manœuvres of pleability*” by which a certain

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description of persons, sometimes "*rise in the world*" with no other qualifications to recommend them than "*a modicum of Latin*"—"an *expertness of Arithmetic and a short system of wordly counsel; the chief ingredients of which are a persevering industry, a reegid economy, a smooth tongue, a pliability of temper, and a constant attention till make every man well pleased wi' himself*."

But experience has shown that those who obtain *prominent* situations, by such means, generally become intoxicated with prosperity. Elevated to a scale in society in which it was not intended by nature they should move, such persons frequently render themselves contemptible, by discarding the prudence which previously regulated their conduct.

You know that Plutarch alluding to that class of men has said "*That they were like little statues set on great bases, made to appear the less by their advancement*." Were evidence required to prove the correctness of the description, we might look to the Province of Upper Canada, as containing at least one glaring example.

Notwithstanding that I am not (as you say) *very prominent in my profession*, it is conceived by some, that I possess a sufficient degree of sagacity to discover the truth, and to detect and overwhelm falsehood and misrepresentation—though it is said, and I admit with truth, that upon discovery of the latter, I am apt to vent my indignation in rather unmeasured terms. How far the opinion thus formed of me is correct, you shall have an opportunity of judging by the sequel of this Letter.

Your next ground of accusation against me, is no less than that of having wilfully and wickedly misstated facts in the evidence I gave before the Committee of the House of Commons appointed to enquire into the civil Government of Lower Canada.

Although I deny you the possession of *great* abilities, I shall not insult your understanding by imagining for an instant, that you totally misunderstood that evidence at the time you read it; and when you wrote your communication to Dr. Lee. This part of my letter is directed more to the public than to the Archdeacon of York.

Conscience intimates to you, how far candour has been violated by the perversion and construction, which you have, with cool deliberation and design, put upon those parts of my testimony to which you have adverted.

You continue the charge as follows: "*He (meaning me) says page 191, the number of the Clergymen of the Church of England have multiplied in a greater ratio than their flocks.*"

To refute this allegation, you declare that almost every Clergyman of the Church of England in Upper Canada has from three to eight stations at which he occasionally performs service; but you have cautiously abstained from making us acquainted with the average number of hearers at each station.—This proves nothing more, than that, the faster stations are multiplied, the greater will be the number of Clergymen, (at least *apparently*) required—and when their numbers amount to *two thousand* (which you prophesied would soon be the case) it may be deemed expedient to divide the extensive Diocese of Quebec—an event I am sure sincerely deprecated by *you*.—And I doubt not that you concur in the generally received opinion, that when it does happen—all temporal authority (which will draw with the Title of *Honorable*) should be withheld from the Prelate who is to govern the Diocese in which you reside; and that his powers should be restricted within the very narrow limits, suggested in the scheme proposed for the appointment of

Bishops in the Colonies, which was approved of and recommended by two of your Archetypes—Bishop *Butler* and Archbishop *Secker*.

But Sir, you affect to forget that my evidence has reference to the Province of Lower as well as Upper Canada, and that what I said respecting the latter was declared to be derived from hearsay

You say that in page 192 I state that the Presbyterians in the Western District of Upper Canada amount in number to 2,250. In order to establish the falsity of this declaration, you proceed as follows. "In that District there was at the time of Mr. Grant's statement neither Presbyterian minister nor congregation, lately a small congregation has been organized at Amherstburg in connection with the Church of Scotland. He (meaning me) assumes that "out of 20,000, the population of the whole District, 16,000 are Presbyterians.—On reference to the report of the House of Assembly for 1828 I do not find a single congregation in that District in communion with the Church of Scotland, and of other Presbyterians only three clergymen and three Churches.—With respect to this District (that is the Western) it appears from a document now before me, signed by two of the principal Inhabitants, that in 1789 and 1790 one half of the whole population belonged to the Church of England.

Does it follow because you do not find in the report of the House of Assembly a single organized congregation in communion with the Church of Scotland and of other Presbyterians only three clergymen and three Churches that there are not 2,250 Presbyterians (a comprehensive term, which embraces all others as well as those of Scotland) within that District? nor does the circumstance (if true) that in 1789 and 1790 one half of the Inhabitants belonged to the Church of England, establish any thing to the contrary.

But Sir, I beg that you will point out that part of my evidence where I am by you made to assume that out of 20,000 the population of the District, 16,000 are Presbyterians; a glaring variation with the first statement, viz: 2,250. If you cannot advert to it in my testimony, I trust you will pardon me, if I request that you will have the kindness to inform me and those to whom you have circulated your Letter to Dr. Lee, for what purpose it was, you condescended to manufacture that gross inconsistency which you have attempted to fasten upon me.

The next paragraph by which you attempt to make good your charge is as follows:

"With the same recklessness Mr. *Grant* supposes that out of 30,000 the population of the Midland District, ten thousand are Presbyterians."

Protesting that that supposition was not made by me, I proceed to examine how you attempt to disprove its correctness.

"The report (say you) of the House of Assembly gives three Presbyterian Clergymen with their congregations, one of which only belongs to the Church of Scotland." *Ergo* (according to you) there are not ten thousand Presbyterians in that District; and by what you have asserted as above, it is clearly demonstrated, that three Clergymen are sufficient to administer to the spiritual wants of all Presbyterians within its limits; that if a greater number were required they could be obtained with facility, as means have been provided for their maintenance as ample as those set apart for the Ministers of the Church of England.

Really Sir, your method of reasoning is wonderful! and if the foregoing is a specimen of the logic intended to be taught in your University, all those (whose representations no doubt you conceive, ought ne-

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ver to have been listened to) may well regret having raised a clamour against the very *liberal* Charter you obtained for that institution.

You next represent part of the evidence given by me thus :

"From the Eastern District, Mr. Grant selects (you have I believe, omitted the word *four*) from out of ten Townships, and gives them as a specimen of the whole—and although warned by the Committee that this selection may have been partially made, yet fearless of detection, for we had no friend acquainted with the localities of the Province present, he persevered." That is—I persevered in giving a *census* of four Townships as a specimen of the whole ten.

You have not supported this last misstatement by any extract from the evidence before the Canada Committee nor by any other proof,—and I defy you to do so.

This is the last passage I shall select from your Letter.—"He (meaning me) says nothing of the county of Stormont in the same District which contains a greater number of Episcopalians and Lutherans; such are the vague and inaccurate statements given by Mr. Grant when speaking of Districts! when he descends to particular congregations, *his assertions are equally at variance with truth*"—you then proceed to enumerate instances where I am supposed to have misrepresented particular congregations.

I hasten to shew that you have wilfully distorted the foregoing parts of my testimony.

In order to do so, it is necessary to compare them with the context. I shall transcribe from the evidence accompanying the report of the Canada Committee, the passages of my Testimony, which have been honored by your notice.—First, because by my own words I wish to stand justified or condemned;—Secondly, because an opportunity will be thereby afforded, to every one, of judging for himself—how far you have misrepresented what I said; and with what design you were pleased to give my language a strained and forced construction contrary to its plain and ordinary sense.

I was asked: "Have you any general notion what the numbers of the Protestant population of Lower Canada are?"

Answer—"I suppose the number in Lower Canada may amount to between 60,000 and 80,000"

Q.—"Have you any notion what number of that population are members of the Church of England?"

Answer.—"The *only means* I have of judging of the comparative numbers, is derived from returns that have been made to some questions that were sent to different parts of the Protestant settlements to respectable persons, that were supposed to be competent to give information on the subject.—(Here follows some remarks upon your noted Chart, which from tenderness to you may be omitted) "I am in possession of the *Answers* to those questions from some of the settlements both in *Upper and Lower Canada* from which I find that the number of Episcopalians vary in the different settlements, but they form but a small portion of the Protestant inhabitants".

Question.—"Can you state the number of congregations, and also of officiating ministers in Upper Canada?"

Answer.—"I cannot state from my own knowledge but I can relate the information received from different parts of Upper Canada to the *Queries that were transmitted*". I then proceeded to give that information thus. "In the Western District of Upper Canada there are about 8000 inhabi-

tants altogether; 3,500 of whom are Roman Catholics, and 4,500 Protestants; one half of the Protestant population, are *supposed* (that is by my informants) to prefer the Presbyterian form of worship."

According to your version of the above, I am made (as you did to certain assertions in your Letter to Mr. Horton) to affirm from *personal knowledge*, that the number of Presbyterians in that District amounted to 2,250; and you insinuate that I meant those in communion with the Church of Scotland only.

The foregoing enumeration of the population of the Western District was made upon information received in 1828, from two of the most respectable inhabitants within it, whose veracity I shall continue to respect until it is impeached by some more unequivocal contradiction, than *your* assertion, supported by a document signed by two of the principal inhabitants of that District in 1789 and 1790.

Next follows what I stated respecting the Midland and Eastern Districts.

Q.—"Will you proceed to state the information you are in possession of with respect to the other Districts?"

A.—"The Midland District contains about 30,000, one third of whom at least, are *supposed* to be attached to the Presbyterian Faith, and who would join in the communion of the Church of Scotland if they were supplied with Ministers from Scotland."

Now Sir, I *affirm* that it must be obvious to every one that the only sense in which the words "*are supposed to be*" can be taken, is, as conveying the opinion of those who gave the Information upon which my statements were predicated. Your gratuitous assertion therefore, that "with the same recklessness Mr. Grant supposes &c" is an intentional perversion of the above paragraph, made to disguise the truth in order to deceive. The next question submitted to me, is as follows:

Q.—"Can you state how many there are of the Church of Scotland in that District?"

Answer.—"No, I cannot. We have more particular information from some of the Townships in the Eastern District, we have received returns from seven out of twelve Townships in the Eastern District; there are three clergymen of the Church of Scotland, residing within the District. The following is a census of four Townships.—The Township of Charlottenburg contains 2,104 Presbyterians, 75 Episcopalians, and 1,652 Roman Catholics;—Lancaster contains 902 Presbyterians, no Episcopalians, 1019 Roman Catholics;—Kenyon contains 597 Presbyterians, no Episcopalians, 490 Roman Catholics;—Lochiel contains 1,152 Presbyterians: one Episcopalian: and 662 Roman Catholics."

Q.—"Have you selected these Townships out of ten as affording the strongest instances of the extent of the Presbyterians?"

A.—"No, I have no other motive than because the information received from those Townships, is more minute than from other parts; and it arises from this circumstance, that in those townships there are clergymen who have taken the trouble of getting information, and it is probable that the number of Presbyterians is greater there, or at least, there are not so many Dissenters, from the circumstance of there being established clergymen in that part of the country."

I challenge the most malevolent sagacity to discover any thing like an attempt on my part, to represent the census of those four Townships as a specimen of all those of which the District is composed; without interlarding the assertion which you have fabricated, to induce a belief that I had done so.

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Although the mode adopted to obtain a statistical account of the Religious denominations in both Provinces, was the best which under circumstances could be devised to obtain the most accurate, yet it could not be expected that information so obtained could be perfect in every respect.—But if any of the statements made by me before the committee, have been ascertained to be founded in error, I am in no manner responsible for such unintentional mistakes (if any exist.)

In addition to the manner in which I expressed myself, from which it must be manifest to the meanest capacity, that what I related before the committee (at least as far as regards Upper Canada) was declared to be obtained from *information* received from various parts of that Province, and not as derived from personal observation: yet to guard against any misconception, and to leave *no excuse* for *misrepresentation* on the subject, the whole is wound up with the following declaration on my part: "I cannot take upon myself to vouch for the accuracy of the foregoing statements, but considering the sources from which the information has been derived, *I believe it to be* (as far as it extends) as correct as could be obtained without enumeration under Public Authority." That Declaration was made in sincerity and in which I still persist notwithstanding any thing you may advance to the contrary.

It could not have been credited that you had a printed copy of the report of the Canada Committee and evidence before your eyes, at the time you composed what relates to me in your Letter to Dr. Lee, if you had not referred to various pages of that Document.

I agree with you, Sir, that "no falsehoods are more malignant than those which contain some sprinkling of truth."

But of all the poisonous weapons discharged by you to the right and left against those who directly or indirectly supported the Presbyterians' interest, none is so impregnated with venom and gall as the one aimed at the breast of your *old and worthy friend*, launched in a dishonorable and dastardly manner, from behind an Ambuscade, in order to inflict a deeper and more deadly wound—I leave him however to fight his own battles, and you, sir, may discover that you deceived yourself in relying upon the *supposed weakness* of one who possesses more than sufficient vigour, to overthrow you in the combat.

I cannot yet part with you without noticing the following sentence, which is particularly directed to Dr. Lee—"you need not be afraid that I will injure the Church that I have deliberately chosen, for it stands in evidence that my congregation is large, that it increases rapidly, and in 1828 comprehended nearly half the population of York and its immediate vicinity!!!"

Humility you know, is the characteristic of an ingenuous mind, and I am sure you will believe me sincere, when I declare, that I have not selected the above as an example of the amiable virtue which distinguishes the "*meek and lowly in heart*." It arrested my attention as affording a strong instance of the melancholy truth, that those placed in the prominent ranks of life seldom hear of their faults.

The advantages conferred upon, or injuries done by you, to the Church, which *you have deliberately chosen* are so universally known and appreciated, that I could hardly have supposed it would have been reserved for me, at this late hour, to inform you in the language of candour and truth, that you have been altogether under a delusion.

May I be permitted to add, that the propagation of the malicious slanders, contained in your Letter to Dr. Lee, is not in the least calculated

to increase the veneration to which *you* consider yourself entitled.—(B.)

The other parts of your Letter are alike distinguished by subtlety, sophistry, and want of candour; but I shall terminate my comments by remarking that the attempt you have made, to stir up discord and strife among the different denominations of your Presbyterian Brethren, affords another proof of your *peaceable* and *charitable* disposition. Such anti-christian conduct is well worthy of the author of the Letter addressed to "*The Right Honorable the Earl of Selkirk on his settlement on the Red River, near Hudson's Bay.*"

That you should have assailed those who provoked no resentment, and for the purpose of promoting your evil designs, should have knowingly and intentionally distorted facts when the means of detection were so ready at hand, must naturally excite surprise and amazement.

A Divine has said, "with regard to the provocation and offences which are unavoidably happening to a man, in his commerce with the world—take it as a rule—as a man's pride is—so is always his displeasure: as the opinion of himself rises,—so does the injury—so does his resentment."

But how are we to account for the rancorous disposition manifested by you in the commencement of hostilities in the character of a general calumniator. The rashness you have betrayed in attempting to revive and perpetuate a controversy, which, as you declare, has been productive of so much *bitterness in this country*, is without precedent.

Your indiscretion savours of insanity, and I am induced to believe that success in the world has bereaved you of part of your faculties.—The precept "*Quantum a rerum turpitudine abes, tantum te a verborum libertate sejungas*" inculcated at School, has been totally obliterated from your memory.

With the lessons of youth, you seem to have forgotten some of the principles of Religion. Is not your conduct in this instance in opposition to the following commands: "Be patient towards all men; see that none return evil for evil to any man; be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Have you not offended against that injunction?—"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." And permit me to enquire if in endeavoring to sow the seeds of jealousy and animosity among other religious denominations, you have not proved yourself to be "*a busy body in other men's matters.*"

I owe you no apology for this letter; and should any one deem the style of it harsh or severe, I beg leave to refer him to the perusal of the one to which it is intended as a reply; confident that no person who does so will maintain that the chastisement hereby inflicted is disproportioned to the offence, (the enormity of which is enhanced by the prominent rank of the offender,) or that the rod of correction has been improperly applied.

In taking my leave of you and your letter, allow me to recommend to your attention before you again obtrude yourself upon the patience of the public, the Proverb of Solomon, which is couched in these words: "*Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbor hath put thee to shame.*"

I have the honor to be

Sir,

Your most Obedient Servant,

J. C. GRANT.

Montreal, 29th Dec. 1829.

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A. It may be necessary to remind the reader that the Dr. wrote "A Discourse on the character of King George the Third—addressed to the Inhabitants of British North America—Printed at Montreal in 1810, & published during the *life* of His late Majesty."

"Letter addressed to R. J. Wilmot Horton, dated 16th May, 1827."

"Letter addressed to Mr. Jefferson, President of the United States—published on 15th April, 1815."

"Letter addressed to General Dearborn—published 6th April, 1816."

"Letter addressed to the Right Hon. the Earl of Selkirk, on his settlement at the Red River near Hudson's Bay."

Possibly, I do the Doctor an injustice in mentioning the latter—It is probable he never expected it would go through a second edition—For if I am correctly informed, it was as much for *profit* as fame that he condescended to become Pamphleteer, in a controversy which terminated in bloodshed.

B. The following is the extremely modest Peroration of the Hon. and Rev. Gentleman's celebrated Speech, delivered before the Legislative Council of Upper Canada, on the 6th day of March, 1828.

"I am anxious to retain the good opinion of those who know me best, and with whom I have acted so many years; and I *feel* proudly conscious that I *deserve* the friendship and esteem of all honourable men and the approbation of the whole Province" !!!

N. B. Editors of papers who have inserted Dr. Strachan's Letter, are requested to publish the foregoing, as the writer is desirous that the poison and the antidote should circulate together.